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Tension in Imagery: A cappella choral settings of Rainer Maria Rilke's poetry by Ramona Luengen

by

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Abstract:

This paper examines areas of tension in the a cappella choral settings of Rainer Maria Rilke's poetry by Ramona Luengen. Existing research that seeks to clarify perception of tension in music is overviewed and considered in order to isolate key elements that communicate the concept musically. In addition, the possibilities for perception of tension within poetry are determined, as well as the potential for opposing elements in the relationship between text and music. Within this framework for examining tension, the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke is contextualized. Ramona Luengen's five a cappella choral settings of Rilke's poetry are examined individually, ordered by date of composition, to determine areas of tension that are perceived. The paper concludes with a brief reflection on the techniques Luengen uses to portray these areas of tension, and how Rilke's poetry contributes to this creation. Appendices that give full text and translations of the five poems are included.

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Introduction

The concept of tension is an ambiguous one, with connotations that extend to both physical and psychological uses. When applied to a musical work, the idea of tension is similar to that of suspense in the response that it generates: a feeling of uncertainty and awareness of an impending resolution often between opposing forces or elements. Even to the untrained musical listener, this experience is palpable, yet the perception of tension is difficult to measure in any quantitative manner. Further exacerbating this struggle is the increase in possibilities when text is an additional element of the music under examination.

This study seeks to investigate the areas of tension experienced in a cappella choral settings of Rainer Maria Rilke's poetry by Canadian composer Ramona Luengen. Existing research that seeks to clarify a precedent for perceiving tension in music will be considered in order to isolate key elements that communicate the concept musically. The possibilities for perception of tension within poetry will be determined, as well as the potential for opposing elements in the relationship between text and music. With this framework established, I will introduce Rainer Maria Rilke's poetry and discuss why his style is ideal for consideration of tension in its many forms. Finally, the musical choices made by Luengen in her five a cappella choral settings of Rilke's poetry will be examined in order to determine how the concept of tension is communicated.

Defining Tension: Previous Work

The study of tension and resolution in Western music theory has been a source of ongoing dispute for both music theorists and cognitive psychologists. Considered a

pioneer in the field of music cognition, Leonard B. Meyer's work on meaning and music[1] relies heavily on psychological arguments and continues to be relevant to the discussion of perceiving tension in music. Meyer's research regarding perception of music is largely concerned with how listeners experience the unfolding of successive events, especially the possibilities afforded by uncertainty in musical direction, creating a sense of suspense when the expected is not immediately revealed in the music. Meyer establishes the relationship of tension and release through discussion of tonal contrast and motivic change; the listener perceives instability of tonality or melodic content by a desire to return to resolution offered by stability. In addition to establishing this tonal hierarchy, Meyer offers the stimulus of expressive features, such as variation in dynamics and tempi. Finally Meyer also points to use of extremes in timbre and register and rhythmic or metric instability serving as substitutes for tonal tension.

Schenkerian analysis influences some more recent theoretical developments, such as Lerdahl and Jackendoff's *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (1983). Their work formalizes the listener's understanding of tonal music by attempting to demonstrate how listeners perceive hierarchy in tonal music. Lerdahl and Jackendoff achieve this by developing a grammar based in part on generative linguistics. This grammar is intended to model musical intuition and takes the form of explicit rules that assign structures that listeners unconsciously infer from a piece. These rules define components of musical intuition that are hierarchical in nature: grouping structure, as seen in the segmentation of music into motives, phrases, sections; metrical structure, as in the hierarchy of strong and weak beats; time-span reduction, as the hierarchy of structural importance of pitches with

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[1] Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956) and *Explaining Music: Essays and Explorations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

respect to their position in both the grouping and metrical structures; and prolongational reduction, as in the hierarchy that expresses harmonic and melodic tension and relaxation. Their study also takes into account the following dimensions of musical structure without attempting to formalize them: dynamics, timbre and motivic-thematic processes. The establishment of a perceived hierarchy creates expectations on the part of the listener to continue to recognize these relationships. As elements are manipulated to defer or negate that expectation, a sense of tension is experienced by the listener.

Morwaread Farbood's 2006 dissertation presents a quantitative, parametric model for describing musical tension based on the results of experiments with participant response to musical stimuli. The musical parameters she includes are: harmony, 'pitch height' [referring to register], melodic expectation, dynamics, onset frequency, tempo and rhythmic regularity.[2] She first confirms that these parameters contribute to the listener's perception of tension through experiments with human subjects and excerpts of musical examples, and then explores models for predicting tension, seeking potential incorporation of these parameters into computer-based composition applications. Her model is uniquely based on a significant amount of empirical data gathered in two experimental settings. Farbood has also gathered research from several studies as a basis for the inclusion of musical elements in creation of musical expectancy: melodic contour, interval size, rhythmic features and tonal and harmonic hierarchies. The results of her experiments show that tension judgments appeared to be influenced most strongly by melodic contour, harmony, tonality, note density [referring to rhythmic frequency], and segmentation of discernable rhythmic melodic or structural elements, as well as expressive features such as dynamics and tempo variation.

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[2] Morwaread Farbood, *A Quantitative, Parametric Model of Musical Tension,* Phd diss. (Mass: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2006), 24.

Previous studies such as Meyer's or Lerdahl and Jackendoff's focused on a small subset of features, particularly harmony and melodic contour or some combination of both, without evaluating how other parameters or expressive features such as dynamic intensity and tempo affected the listener's sensitivity to the chosen features. Farbood's second experiment featured musical excerpts composed or selected with six parameters in mind: harmony, melodic expectation, 'pitch height', tempo, onset frequency, and dynamics. Relying on the established tension-influencing elements of earlier studies, such as Lerdahl and Jackendoff, as well as the first completed in her own study, Farbood's experiment evaluated the interaction of these features to evaluate the influence of combined elements on the perception of tension. All three of these studies examine similar fundamental musical features; however what are not included in Farbood's model of musical tension but are in Meyer's and Lerdahl and Jackendoff's are the elements of meter and timbre.

While the above studies do not provide a fully comprehensive discussion of tension in music, the similarities between them provides a framework of musical elements from which I will work. Sound dimensions included in all three studies are: dynamics, harmonic and tonal hierarchies, melodic contour, and instability in a structural or rhythmic sense. Included in two of three studies are timbre, register and structural or metric instability. Musical structures using these elements, depending on how they are arranged and interrelated, create expectancies. Both the expectancies themselves and how they are resolved, or not resolved, influence the way people perceive tension in music. It is this combined set of concepts that will serve as the basis for identifying tension within Luegen's choral music.

Tension in poetry also comes from the use of structural elements and the relationship between them and many of these elements are similar to those found in music: the rhythm of metric accent and pacing, inflection and timbral considerations and structure, for example. In *A Poet's Guide to Poetry*, Mary Kinzie defines tension as a pull, occurring "either when syntax works against and diverges from line, or when other elements of style work against each other."[3] By this definition, tension in text is prosodic instability seen in a structural or metric sense. Using elements of form, line, syntax, meter, sound patterns and vocabulary, the concept of tension originating entirely within the text will also be considered.

Finally, the combination of text and music allows for further areas of tension between the relationships of organizational elements between the two. The structure of the music compared to the form of text, or a stressed musical moment combined with an unstressed poetic moment, are examples that support Kinzie's definition above. In each work studied, separate musical and textual features as well as their combined effect will be examined to discover the relationship between music and text in Luengen's settings of Rilke's poetry.

The Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke

Rainer Maria Rilke is one of the most celebrated poets of the 20th century. The sensitivity with which Rilke observes and describes ideas and objects makes it difficult to read his words without responding. His poetic style is rich in imagery, varying from the simple to the profound. Also evident in Rilke's verse is the struggle to reconcile disparate ideals; he addresses some of the fundamental questions of human existence: love, death,

[3] Mary Kinzie, *A Poet's Guide to Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 470.

and our relation to the divine. Because Rilke wrote often of his struggles with these ideals in his correspondence, his poetry conveys the tension of this struggle more clearly than any sense of relief or resolution. To examine this tension, the impact of modernist influences during Rilke's life will be considered, as well as the technical choices made by Rilke that communicate the struggle in his poetry: enjambment, metrical and rhythmic considerations, and a flexibility of formal structure.

As Rilke wrote prolifically throughout his adult life, his work is subject to appraisals of development. In *Rilke, Modernism and the Poetic Tradition* (Ryan 1999), Judith Ryan places Rilke's poetic style within the context of the modernist movement of the poet's time. She describes his journey from aesthetic ideals toward a more modernist approach and in doing so illustrates why Rilke's poetry is well-suited for the examination of the variety of ways in which tension can be manifested. Her introduction begins with this statement: "If the rise of modernism is the story of a struggle between the burden of tradition and a desire to break free of it, then Rilke's poetic development is a key example of this tension at work."

Ryan suggests that the context in which Rilke's poetry was written is one source of tension, as the poet was influenced by the ideals of the modernist movement. His reaction to, and the influence of, modernism can also be evaluated by examining the specific devices used by Rilke in his poetry. In his analysis of Rilke's style, H.W. Belmore notes that Rilke made technical choices that would have been considered unconventional: frequent use of alliteration, vowelling and enjambment are often seen in Rilke's works. Enjambment is a characteristic especially tied to tension due to its negation of form: "Enjambment is one of the main agents of this peculiar tension: it is, in

a way, a negation of the verse form which, however, continually reasserts itself, mainly through the rhyme; the poem seems to dissolve and is pulled back in a steady rhythm."[4] Rilke used the technique of enjambment throughout his career, while there are other devices that are seen only in individual works that are restricted to a specific period of his stylistic development.

Belmore points to uncertainty in Rilke's earlier writings being tied to meter and rhyme at the sacrifice of word order, noting that Rilke would reverse words often for no better reason than to fit the meter. Belmore suggests that this "clumsy" style is an eclectic absorption of Rilke's contemporaries in the poet's earliest writings.[5] As Rilke's personal style began to take shape, there was less incorporation of other styles and more consistent use of devices to communicate his own chosen imagery. Belmore combines full exploitation of a great number of technical devices with a certain disregard for traditional and established forms as the main characteristic of Rilke's mature style.[6] He relates these two identifying traits by stating that Rilke's manipulation of form is not rigid, but flexible, which results in the use of technique that becomes complex, that: "not only the number of various devices regularly used by Rilke is infinitely greater [than other German poets of his time], but that the interaction, complexity, subtlety of such devices is of an altogether different order."[7]

Rilke's departure from traditional formal structures is not so striking that the reader is isolated from the poetry. His experimental tendencies emerge gradually and gently in a way that blurs the accepted guidelines rather than destroying them completely.

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[4] H.W. Belmore, *Rilke's Craftmanship: An Analysis of his Poetic Style* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell & Mott, 1954), 225.
[5] Ibid., 174.
[6] Ibid., 189.
[7] Ibid.

Ryan relates this to Rilke's position in relation to the modernist movement: "Rilke's form of modernism is a very particular kind that is both elegiac and restorative. He did not participate in the various experimental movements that constituted the avant-garde of the teens and twenties [of the twentieth century]."[8] While Rilke's style expanded beyond the use of traditional forms and included techniques such as enjambment to further obscure the formal structure, he did so without subscribing to methods that were experimental and avant-garde.

Another acknowledgement of Rilke's lack of commitment to traditional forms is found in his correspondence. There exists both in original language as well as translations significant amounts of correspondence between Rilke and his acquaintances regarding his art and work, yet explicit documentation that focuses on poetic style in a technical sense is rarely cited. This has left researchers lamenting that quotations regarding style or other questions of poetic technique are impossible to find. In his analysis of Rilke's style, H.W. Belmore has deduced by the lack of attention paid by Rilke to discussing his own technique that the content of the poetry outweighed the relevance of a particular form, which served only as a means to the end of communicating the message of the poem.[9] This desire to communicate the poem's message through the combination of specific words rather than the overall structure supports Belmont's statement that among Rilke's most innovative poetic techniques is the manner in which he experiments with imagery in his poems, creating a system of association between meaning and sound to support, reflect and explain the poem's message.[10]

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[8] Judith Ryan, *Rilke, Modernism and Poetic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 221.
[9] Belmore, 170.
[10] Ibid., 191.

Luengen and Rilke

It is Rilke's poetic drive to communicate imagery that appeals to Ramona Luengen.[11] Her introduction to Rilke's poetry came during high school through a correspondence German course that exposed her to the poetry of Rilke and Heine. She describes the language of Rilke's poetry as beautiful but also complex. This means that while it is rewarding to set Rilke's poetry for voice, her musical setting often reflects Rilke's complexity of text through its own level of difficulty. As a result, a successful performance of Luengen's settings usually requires a choral group that is accomplished enough to successfully communicate both the poetic complexities and nuance of the German text in addition to the resulting musical-textual imagery. Luengen describes the mood of Rilke's poetry as carrying a certain sense of gravity, even at its lightest points.

Luengen grew up in a home where the eclectic musical styles of her Romanian mother and German father exposed her to a variety of vocal and instrumental music. Luengen sang in her church choir, and also studied piano, achieving her ARCT certificate. She entered university studies in music at the University of British Columbia, with the goal of pursuing a career in teaching. Her choral involvement at UBC began as a singer in the Choral Union, eventually culminating in her acceptance into the University Singers chamber choir, both under the leadership of James Fankhauser.

Luengen came to composition late in her musical education. Her first efforts at composition were for Cortland Hultberg's third-year theory course at UBC. It was Hultberg's support that encouraged Luengen to pursue composition as an elective the following year. Not surprisingly, her first compositions were works for a cappella choir.

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[11] Unless otherwise stated, all information sourced to Ramona Luengen was gathered during telephone interviews with the composer during February 2009.

She later completed a Master of Music in composition under Hultberg, and a Doctorate in Music from the University of Toronto, where she worked under Harry Freedman and Derek Holman.

The manner with which Luengen approaches the compositional process also aligns her with Rilke in that they share a disregard for form, choosing to allow the individual lines of text to create the shape of the poem or piece of music, rather than pre-selecting a form in which to write. Consistent with Rilke's poetic impetus, it is the meaning of the individual phrases of text combined with the poem's cumulative intent that results in Luengen's harmonic and melodic development of the text rather than any pre-determined structure. Luengen develops the harmonic language for her settings first by establishing the key area that seems to fit with the initial phrase of text. The harmonic progressions emerge based on the phrase-by-phrase unfolding of text rather than following an overall scheme. If a formal structure results, it is more of an unconscious process based on unity of text than because of an independently pre-conceived structural concept.

Luengen has set five of Rilke's poems for a cappella mixed chorus: *Ô Lacrimosa* (1993), *Frühlingslied* (1994), *Mésange* (1998), *Du Fremde: Musik* (2002), and *In tiefen Nächten* (2002). These five settings will be considered independently in chronological order of their composition date, examining how tension is communicated in each. This tension will be explored through an investigation of the origin and structure of the poem in relation to the intent of the text, and then by studying the relationship between the poem and the musical setting, observing the musical elements of timbre, dynamics, harmonic and tonal hierarchies, melodic contour, and instability in a structural, metric or rhythmic sense as they contribute to the perception of tension.

Ô Lacrimosa

Ô Lacrimosa is a trilogy of poems written in 1925, and is unique in Rilke's output as being the only set of poems he expressly intended to be set to music, in this case by Ernst Krenek. This is expressed in the poem's subtitle "Trilogie, zu einer künftigen Musik von Ernst Krenek" (Trilogy for future music of Ernst Krenek). Krenek published his musical setting of the poems for soprano and piano in 1926. CBC commissioned Luengen's setting of the poem for the 1993 World Symposium on Choral Music in Vancouver. The piece was to be performed by Chanticleer, an award-winning twelve voice male choir based in San Francisco. Their commission called for a work of ten minutes in duration, for which Luengen chose Rilke's trilogy rather than a single poem. Within the first of the three poems, Luengen creates tension through using melodic contour as a motivic element, rhythmic instability that obscures meter, ambiguous and non-functional harmonic language, and structural instability between the poem's form and the musical setting. In the second poem, another use of motivic manipulation occurs that unites harmonic, melodic and registral tensions with metric instability to produce the climax of the trilogy. Finally, the third poem offers a contrast as it serves to dissipate the tensions built by the first two poems and provides the trilogy with a sense of resolution.

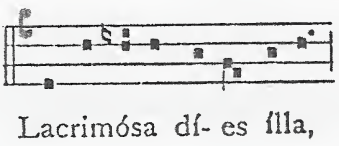
In her introduction to the work, Luengen describes her interpretation by defining the Latin term of the title. 'Lacrimosa' comes from a portion of the Requiem Mass, with origins in the Requiem service, and describes a day of weeping; it is also found in the Stabat Mater text, where the word depicts a weeping Mary grieving by the cross.[12] Luengen makes reference to both of these Catholic sources in her work. Firstly, she

[12] Ron Jeffers, *Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire*, vol.1 (Oregon: earthsongs, 1988), 67.

selects the plainchant from the relevant portion of the Requiem Mass as a main melodic motive in the work. The second context is depicted by the text of the poem, as Rilke writes of a sorrowful female character in the first of his three poems. Luengen interprets this character as portraying Mary as a tearful figure who acts as a mediator between humanity and the realm of faith. [13] Luengen describes her attraction to this poem to be founded on this relationship, one that serves to connect the individual with the limitless immortal realm.

The first movement includes three stanzas of text, the first and third being four lines in length, and the shorter middle stanza being only three lines in duration. Luengen's setting begins by using the plainchant from the Requiem Mass, meant to emphasize the timelessness of the theme of suffering (see example 1).[14]

Example 1: 'Lacrimosa dies illa' plainchant



Luengen references this chant in the opening phrase with the tenor and baritone in unison in measures 2 to 5 (see example 2). Luengen also expands the use of the upper-neighbour note between the third and fifth notes of the chant as a unifying motive throughout the first movement to express the phrase "Oh Tränen" (Oh tears), heard in the soprano and alto in measures 3 to 5 (example 2). The neighbouring semitone gesture found in both of these examples is at times expanded to a whole tone, but retains its

[13] Ramona Luengen. Introductory Notes. *Ô Lacrimosa*. Manuscript. Canadian Music Centre. 1993.
[14] Ibid.

refrain-like quality further communicating a sense of tension through its sinuous melodic contour.

Example 2: *Ô Lacrimosa*, movement I, mm.1-5

Throughout the first phrase, the use of an F pedal in the bass also creates a sense of tension in the ambiguous harmonic direction of the movement's opening. The piece begins in F minor, and while the upper four voices move out of that harmonic centre through the use of B-natural, the bass maintains the F pedal for the first eleven-measure phrase (see examples 2 and 3).

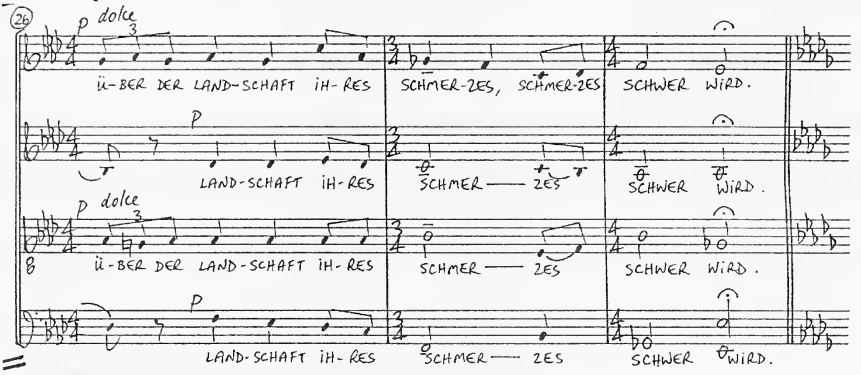
The constantly shifting meters at the outset of the piece create a sense of rhythmic instability at the metric level. The instability is enhanced by the offset entrance of the first full phrase of "lacrimosa dies illa" in the tenor voice occurring on the second half of the second beat in measure 11 (see example 3) when all previous fragmented entries of the text have occurred on a main pulse rather than a partial beat. This rhythmic and metric instability continues until the first homophonic entrance at measure 21.

Example 3: *Ô Lacrimosa*, movement I, mm. 6-14:

It is here that the piece has moved from the opening chant-like section into the texture and motion that is maintained for the remainder of the movement. Once the voices begin in this mostly homophonic texture, only two lines of text are set before there is a move from F minor to B-flat minor (see example 4). Within the setting of those two lines Luengen gives no harmonic resolution, but instead prolongs the final statement of the last two words of the second line, "schwer wird" (heavy will be). The final word "wird" (will be) is further prolonged with a fermata. By this point the G-flat of the new key is already present, having appeared in the soprano in measure 27 on "Schmerzes"

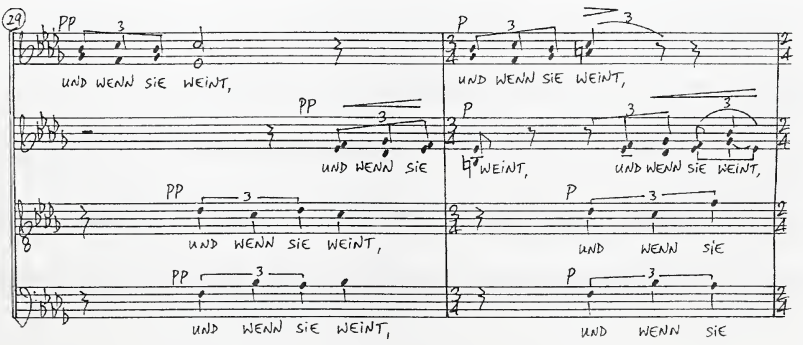
(pain), as well as in the bass and tenor in measure 28 on "schwer" and "wird", respectively. The inclusion and prominence of the G-flat means that the transition to the new key of D-flat major is already occurring by the close of the phrase. The fact that the two sustained chords have no clear harmonic purpose within the previous phrase means that the close of the phrase does not provide any sense of harmonic resolution, resulting in a harmonic tension that continues to seek some kind of closure.

Example 4: *Ô Lacrimosa*, movement I, mm. 26-28:



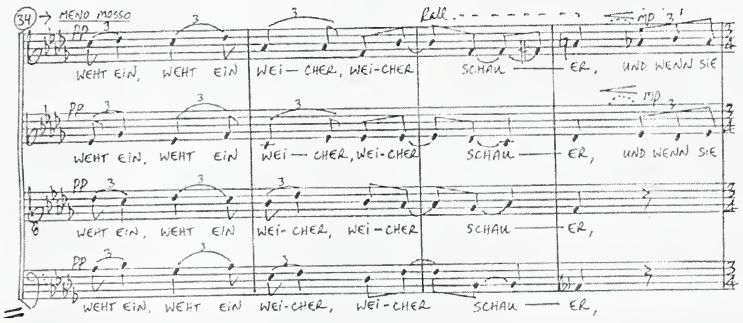
In the next phrase the rhythmic motion quickens, with eighth-note triplets appearing in the upper voices, and quarter-note triplet motion being used in the lower voices in an overlapping setting of fragments of the text "und wenn sie weint" (and when she weeps). This rhythmic overlapping obscures the meter in this passage, creating rhythmic tension (see example 5).

Example 5: *Ô Lacrimosa*, movement I, mm. 29-30:



At the close of the third line "weicher Schauer" (gentle shower) there is a point of relaxation in Luengen's setting emphasized by a *rallentando* marking, homophonic writing and rests in the lower voices (see example 6). Relaxation in the setting at this point, however, creates tension within the poet's form itself and between that form and that of the musical setting. This is a use of poetic enjambment, where Rilke has chosen to end a line in the middle of a phrase and continue without pause into the next (here, the fourth) line. Luengen has opted to fragment and repeat the text, and so she pauses in measure 37 to return back to the beginning of the line instead of continuing on to the next (see example 6). Although the *rallentando* provides a sense of relaxation, the harmonic language offers no sense of resolution: a D-flat major chord in second inversion is given to the lower three voices against which the sopranos sing an A-natural, creating an augmented fifth on the final chord of the phrase.

Example 6: *Ô Lacrimosa*, movement I, mm. 34-37:



The transition into the second stanza offers another example of unconventional structure. The voices continue in a homophonic texture, with no sense of closure or slowing articulation between the end of the first stanza and the onset of the second, although there is a diminuendo to *piano* and a subito *forte* marking the new stanza. There is a new tempo indication, but the difference between the new (quarter note = c.63) and

the former (quarter note = c.58) is minimal. Instead, a more noticeable change in register and tempo is given between the first and second lines of the second stanza. A *rallentando,* a slowing of rhythmic activity, a rest in the soprano voice and a fermata mark the transition between these two lines of the second stanza (see example 7). This choice emphasizes the meaning of the text by negating the form, as the phrase that receives the greater sense of weight and pause before moving to the next is "waage aller Tränen!" (weigh all tears!).

Example 7: *Ô Lacrimosa*, movement I, mm. 41-49:

The setting of the rest of the second stanza returns to the use of triplet motion, but this time without obscuring the meter as seen in measures 29 to 30 (seen in example 5), and at a *piano* dynamic with no indicated *crescendo*. It is only with the last line of this stanza

that the texture returns to homophony, but the dynamic remains quiet, never rising above *mezzo piano*. This highlights the next sectionalized moment, the eighth note preceding measure 58, quite striking as the dynamic leaps to *forte* and the voices are in eight-part divisi for the first time (see example 8).

Example 8: *Ô Lacrimosa*, movement I, mm. 54-62:

This change in texture and dynamic occurs not only to signify the beginning of the third stanza, but also a return to the first line of the second stanza, "Oh Tränenschwere" (Oh heavy tears) in the four-part women's voices in measure 58 to 59, and also a repetition of the final line of the second stanza in the men's voices in measures 59 to 62. To further overlap the stanzas, the initial text of the first stanza then returns in measures 63 to 67 in the women's voices in the same punctuating motive of the second stanza's first line from the men in measures 64 to 65 (see example 9).

Example 9: *Ô Lacrimosa*, movement I, mm. 63-67:

It is significant that Luengen chooses a phrase that combines text from both preceding stanzas instead of a linear move toward the third stanza to return to an expanded version of the harmonic and melodic material seen earlier in the piece, beginning in measure 21. This point of return stands as a formal division, which is significant because it occurs just prior to the beginning of the third stanza rather than simultaneously with its start. This serves as the return to a loosely structured arc form for the three stanzas, even though it

occurs on the final line of the second stanza rather than at the onset of the third stanza. The third stanza continues the same material from this point on, alternating triplet motion in some voices within an otherwise largely homophonic texture.

The final six measures of the movement reinforce the sense of an arc structure with a return to the plainchant style found at the beginning of the piece. The baritone voice reiterates the opening figure of the "lacrimosa" plainchant, the women's voices return to the "Oh Tränen" motive of measures 3 to 5, and the basses return to the F pedal of the opening. Significantly, the key has not returned to F minor, and the key signature remains that of B-flat minor. However, the piece ends on open F octaves, with the tenor on the dominant (see example 10), implying an F tonic. The absence of the third may also serve as another reference to plainchant in this setting, with modal implications inferred by the use of an archaic sense of open fifths in cadence. The tenor role at the close of the piece is significant in that the motive is an exact repetition of that which appeared in measures 3 to 5 in the opening phrase, except that the text is now the "Oh Tränenvolle" of the women's voices instead of the "dies illa" that was set previously to the chant melody, illustrating an integration between the two contexts of the word "lacrimosa" -- the plainchant and the German text.

Example 10: *Ô Lacrimosa*, movement I, mm. 88-94:

The second movement of the trilogy is a free-form poem of only seven lines, constituting only two sentences. Luengen's interpretation of this text is influenced by an idea often discussed by Rilke: in order to become one with nature, you must negate yourself and see the larger picture of nature and then observe your place within that. It is through stepping back and removing ourselves - the surrender of self - that he suggests will allow humankind to become united with nature.

Luengen considers this concept to be central to this poem's image of the breathing of the earth and the cosmos: the breath of life. A sense of 'breath' is conveyed in the music by a rhythmic motive of two sixteenth notes followed by an eighth note, which is tied to a quarter note (see example 11). This rhythmic motive appears each time the word breath, "Atemzug," is sung, and is intended to suggest "the reverberations of the breath within the universe."[15]

Example 11: *Ô Lacrimosa*, movement II, mm. 1-10:

[15] Luengen, 1993.

This "Atemzug" motive is startling in its initial appearance. The women's voices begin in unison and then divide into a repeated compact cluster of three notes on the word "Atemzug," thus producing a static quality through its blurring of harmonic progressions. The repetition of notes likewise gives no sense of harmonic or melodic direction. Luengen describes this technique of beginning with something that is unsettling and not quite understandable to the human ear as an attempt to capture dissonance in an otherworldly way. A very soft dynamic range, that extends to the impossibly soft dynamic of *pppp* in measure 6, emphasizes this mysterious quality and is marked as such (*misterioso*) by Luengen. This fragmentation of a single line of text lasts for nineteen measures of the movement.

When the next portion of text is introduced in the bass 1 voice in measure 19, Luengen sets the division in the text according to the comma break within Rilke's phrase rather than at the beginning of the second line. At this point in the text, Rilke once again makes use of enjambment to obscure the structure of the poem and Luengen again follows the phrase meaning rather than the poetic structure when setting the text. It is this text and this bass 1 line that expand toward to the climax of the entire trilogy, culminating in a fiendishly difficult rhythmic mosaic that makes use of harmonic dissonance and metric instability to underline the tension in the text (see example 12). It begins with a divisi bass part overlapping the same text in stretto on unison G[16], with the bass 2 entering at a delay of 1.5 beats behind the bass 1. The tenor is then added, entering an eighth note after the bass 1, and repeating the pattern on G-sharp, thus creating a dissonance between tenors and basses. The alto joins the men with the same chant-like

[16] As illustrated in the example, the score incorrectly uses a treble clef for the bass I part, but should actually read as if written in bass clef. This is a typo in the manuscript.

motion on C, maintaining an independent rhythmic pattern just as the tenor switches to a triplet whole note figure. At this point the tenor has moved to the pitch A, changing the dissonance with the basses from a semitone to a whole tone.

Example 12: *Ô Lacrimosa*, movement II, excerpts of climax from mm. 19-31, 55-61:

The soprano is added to the texture in measure 31 in an additional independent rhythmic pattern that begins on C-sharp, which creates a semitone dissonance with both the now-divisi alto pitch of D and with the continuing G of the divisi bass line.[17] The passage continues to build over forty measures, culminating in full eight-part divisi with two voices (bass 1 and tenor 2) consistently singing quarter note triplet patterns over the duple eighth note patterns of the other six voices. This produces an extended period of unresolved harmonic and rhythmic tension between the parts. Melodic motion of individual voices is almost non-existent, as the voices move collectively in clusters that shift by semitones. The complete melodic motion of the bass 2 part, for example, is G – G-flat – F – E. What is more striking is the shifting but continuous dissonance between the voices, as there is a tritone or semitone intervallic relationship present among the parts at every moment in the build to the climax, except for three measures – measures 29 to 31 -- near the beginning of the phrase. The most heightened harmonic tension occurs in measures 53 to 60 when the alto 1's E-natural forms a tritone against the B-flat in the tenor 1 part, coinciding with a D in the alto 2 part that creates a tritone against the A-flat of the tenor 2. The misaligned triplets throughout this section, the rising tessitura in the women's voices, the gradual increase in dynamic level and insistent harmonic dissonance combine to create an overwhelming sense of tension in the music.

In Luengen's introduction to this work, she explains that this climax represents the process of humankind becoming one with nature, re-informing the static beginning as the breath that leads to all growth, even when connected to death. This cyclic connection helps to inform the return to a *pppp* dynamic after the climax resolves. The voices also

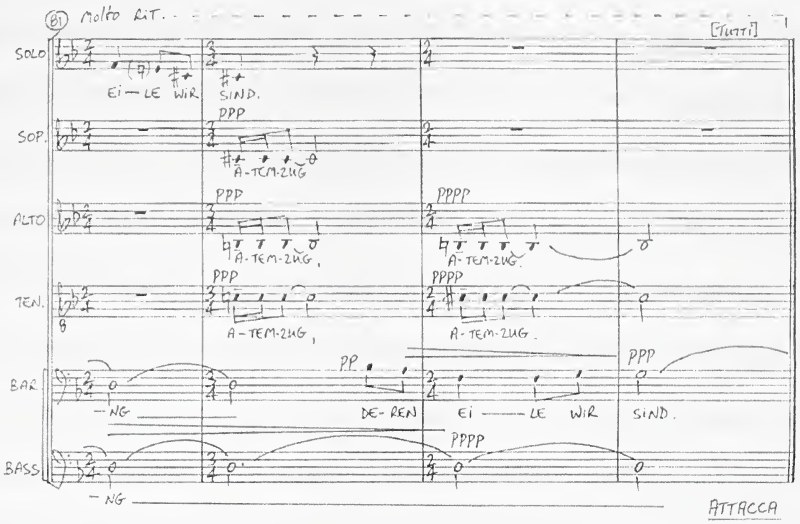
[17] As seen in example 12, the Bass 1 line is incorrectly notated with a treble clef from mm. 19-24; this is corrected by the use of a bass clef from measure 25 onward.

return to the fragmented "Atemzug" motive of the movement's opening. At this point, however, the tension created by the initial dissonance sounds more relaxed as it has followed a passage of such extreme harmonic tension. It creates more of a sense of release from the tension that has just ended.

In measure 70 the piece shifts suddenly to a homophonic texture, which is a startling contrast to the urgency of the overlapping voices heard previously. At this point only three of the seven lines of text have been set. Luengen describes what follows this dramatic moment as a sort of coda, despite the fact that the bulk of the poem is set within it. At this point the text has shifted from describing the breath itself to the placement of those who have witnessed it – the breathed upon. Luengen offers this coda as a resolution to the confusion that precedes it, as the unification of humankind and nature. Rilke's belief in distance between humankind and the larger concept of nature, in the surrender of self as a necessity to achieve a peaceful relationship, was Luengen's inspiration for allowing partial resolution through the simplification of the setting. At this point in the music the sense of resolution responds to Rilke's understanding of this relationship, which results in a release of musical tension. This is further expressed through the use of a continuous homophonic texture and moderate dynamic range and tessitura.

What prevents a full sense of resolution is the return of the "Atemzug" clusters, now shared between the soprano, alto and tenor voices (see example 13). These cluster chords delay a complete harmonic resolution until the beginning of the next movement so that the listener is drawn forward, encouraged by the sustaining of the baritone note into the opening of the next movement, and the direction of "attaca".

Example 13: *Ô Lacrimosa*, movement II, mm. 81-84:



The third poem of the trilogy features the most frequent use of enjambment in the set, with only two sentences spread over twelve lines of poetry. The reflection upon the relationship between humankind and nature continues, and the hint of resolution that occurred in the end of the second movement is expanded upon here. The texture remains in a chorale-style homophony and is entirely in D-flat major. The shift to such a traditional, lyrical choral style corresponds with the image Rilke has chosen to illustrate the growth of spring: the flower. Luengen admits that this is Rilke's gift of subtle imagery at work; he could have chosen any image of spring with more power or virility, but he selected the most simple and unobtrusive image. Likewise, there is little sense of tension within this movement: it is in clearly structured phrases with regular points of relaxation indicated by breath markings for all voices. The harmonic direction is clear and straightforward, there is a lyrical melodic contour and a sense of harmonic resolution at the close that culminates in a perfect authentic cadence in the home key of D-flat major.

Frühlingslied

Frühlingslied is from one of Rilke's most celebrated collections, *Die Sonette An Orpheus*. These two books of sonnets, fifty-five poems in total, were written within the span of less than two weeks in February of 1922. It has been argued that this speed of composition would not have been possible had Rilke not allowed himself to take unprecedented freedoms with the traditional form.[18] As it stands, sixteen of the sonnets follow traditional forms of iambic or trochaic pentameter, and the remaining thirty-nine are in mixed forms, which vary freely in length.[19] The prescribed richness of rhyme in the form of the poems signified happy abandon for Rilke, resulting in a lightness and celebratory quality, captured in the "enraptured play of rhythms and rhymes."[20] This quality of lightness unifies the collection of sonnets, and the example of re-appropriating this classic form is considered in many ways Rilke's most daring step into the Modernist sphere.[21]

Luengen's setting of *Frühlingslied* was commissioned by CBC for the National Youth Choir in 1994, conducted by Diane Loomer. Loomer and Luengen collaborated on the selection of the poem, searching for a lighter and more playful poem that would encapsulate the energy of the youth who would be singing it. The text of the chosen poem describes earth as a schoolchild who is learning and growing. It follows the rhyme scheme ABAB CDCD EFG EFG, with the first two quatrains using the rhyme scheme of the Shakespearean sonnet (ABAB CDCD) and the concluding sextet using the rhyme

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[18] Eudo C. Mason, *Rilke* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1963), 101.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Norbert Fuerst, *Phases of Rilke* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), 184.
[21] Ryan, 167.

scheme of the Italian sonnet (EFG EFG). The use of enjambment is prevalent throughout the poem.

The text of the poem, while playful, suggests tension in the struggle between authority and youth, lending a mischievous quality to the child-like energy of the words. This struggle inspires further tension in Luengen's musical setting, illustrated through rhythmic figures that obscure meter, the use of irregular meter, a harmonic restlessness that resists falling into a tonal center and a disparity between the formal structure of the poem and the setting's musical divisions.

The opening phrase of Luengen's setting directs all voices to sing 'sotto voce', at an extremely soft *pianissimo* level. The tenor and bass sing straight quarter notes, while the soprano and alto obscure the second beat of the triple meter with a tied eighth note and a triplet rhythm on the third beat. Immediately a sense of playfulness is established in the music through the rhythmic interaction of the male and female voices (see example 14). Tension is established by the ambiguous harmonic direction of the phrase, which includes a C-minor ascending melodic motion in the tenor against an alto melodic fragment that has both an A-flat and C-flat. This phrase ends on an A-flat major triad with a passing note D in the tenor (see example 15.)

Example 14: *Frühlingslied*, mm. 1-2:

= ca. 56 - 58
pp sotto voce
Soprano
Früh - ling ist wie -der - ge - kom - men. ist wie -der - ge -
pp sotto voce
Alto
Früh - ling ist wie -der - ge - kom - men. ist wie -der - ge -
pp sotto voce
Tenor
Früh - ling ist wie - der -, ist
pp sotto voce
Bass
Früh - ling ist wie - der -, ist

Example 15: ***Frühlingslied,*** **mm. 3-4:**

p
- kom-men, ist wie-der-ge - kom-men.
p
pp
- kom-men, ist wie-der-ge - kom-men. Früh-ling ist wie der-ge
p
pp
wie der - ge - kom - men. Früh-ling. Früh-ling ist ge
p
wie - der - ge - kom - men.

Harmonic ambiguity communicates this tension throughout the first stanza. The most significant change in the texture occurs in the final phrase of the stanza: "Für die Beschwerde langen Lernens bekommt sie den Preis" (For this long hard study, she wins the prize). At this point Luengen has chosen to use only the men's voices, beginning in unison at measure 14 but quickly changing to the clashing interval of a second in measures 15 to 16 (between the B-flat in the bass against the C in the tenor, followed by an A-natural against a B-natural), and later moving to a tritone between bass and tenor 1 with a G against a D-flat on the word 'Lernens' (see example 16). The need for harmonic resolution is intensified by the increase in dynamic level, shaped with a *crescendo* during the phrase.

Example 16: ***Frühlingslied,*** **mm. 13-17:**

13
= ca. 72
vie - le...
vie - le...
Risoluto
mf
f
vie - le... Für die Be - schwer-de lan-ges Ler-nens be - kommt sie den
mf
f
o vie-le... Für die Be - schwer-de lan-ges Ler-nens be - kommt sie den

This tritone dissonance is altered immediately by movement to an octave G between the tenor and divisi bass for the conclusion of the phrase "bekommt sie den Preis". This also marks the appearance of the loudest dynamic marking thus far in the piece, *forte*, and the marking 'risoluto'. Perhaps the use of men's voices in unison depicts the authoritative quality of the teacher who is described further in the next stanza of text. There is no playfulness or restlessness here, which contrasts with much of the rest of the musical character in this piece.

The second stanza returns to melodic content similar to that found at the opening of the piece, with triplet figures and largely homophonic texture. In the setting of the end of the third line of this stanza, the introduction of asymmetrical meter disrupts the steady flow of the duple meter, which, combined with greater rhythmic and melodic independence of parts, sets up a greater sense of tension (see example 17). This reflects the text, which describes the teacher being able to quiz the earth on her knowledge as a student, with a sense of anticipation regarding the outcome of the quiz: "Nun, wie das Grüne, das Blaue heisse, dürfen wir fragen: sie kanns, sie kanns!" (Now, we may ask her to name the greens and blues: she knows, she knows!) Tension is heightened here by markings of *crescendo* and *poco accelerando*.

Example 17: *Frühlingslied*, mm. 25-30:

25
poco accel.
♩ = ca. 138
f
Blau-e heis-se. das Blau-e heis - se, dürf - ten wir fra-gen: sie
wie das Grü-ne, das Blau-e, das Blau-e heis - se, dürf - ten wir fra-gen: sie
ne, das Grü - ne, das Blau-e heis - se, dürf - ten wir fra-gen: sie
Grün - ne, das Grü - ne, wie das Blau-e heis - se, dürf - ten wir fra-gen: sie
29
kanns, sie kanns!
kanns, sie kanns!
kanns, sie kanns!
kanns, sie kanns!

Tension is again resolved by the use of a unifying rhythmic motive for the fourth and final line of the stanza and by setting the choir in a four-part homophonic texture that leads harmonically to a concluding G major close.

The transition to the third stanza is marked by unison among the four voice parts, then fills out to G major and closes with a sense of harmonic restlessness as the phrase ends with a *molto ritardando* despite no clear cadence. Instead, measure 37 features the pitch G in the bass, confirming the tonic, against an A in the women's voices, and creating a tritone with the D-flat in the tenor 2, which is itself a major second from the E-flat of the tenor 1 (see example 18).

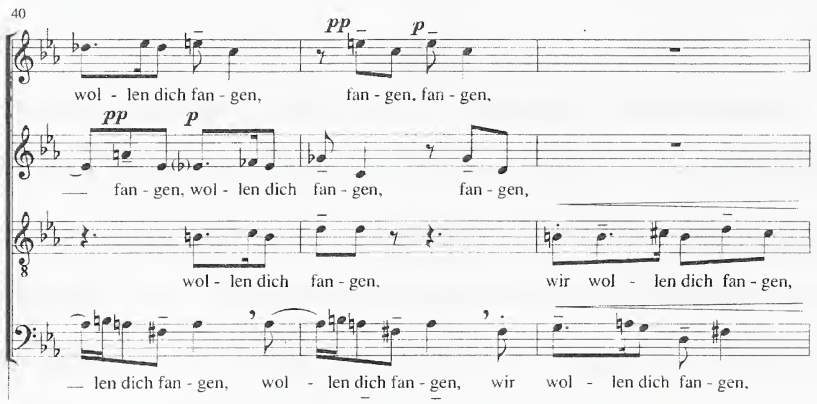
Example 18: *Frühlingslied,* mm. 34-39:

34
allarg.
molto rit.
glück - li - che, spie - le nun mit den Kin - dern, mit den
glück - li - che, spie - le nun mit den Kin - dern, mit den
glück - li - che, spie - le nun mit den Kin - dern, mit den
glück - li - che, spie - le nun mit den Kin - dern.
37
Playfully
accel.
♩. = ca. 56
Kin - dern. Wir
Kin - dern. Wir wol - len dich fan - gen.
Kin - dern. Wir wol - len dich fan-gen, fan - gen,
mit den Kin - dern. Wir wol

The harmonic tension of this phrase ending leads into the next musical section, which is

the first to stay consistently within a single meter. The combination of an imitative rhythmic melodic motive and 6/8 meter illustrate the text's playful but slightly antagonistic or taunting expression: "Wir wollen dich fangen, fröhliche Erde" (We want to catch you, jolly earth). This mood is confirmed by the preference for tritone intervals in the melody, such as the E-natural to B-flat in the tenor at measure 38, and the A-natural to E-flat in the alto in the following measure. Also unusual in this section are the imitative entries that remain tonally independent of each other. This independence creates a sense of chaos between parts by the absence of a harmonic hierarchy. This lack of tonal centre between voices represents youthful rebellion in the way that each voice refuses a position of subordination to another (see example 19).

Example 19: *Frühlingslied*, mm. 40-42:

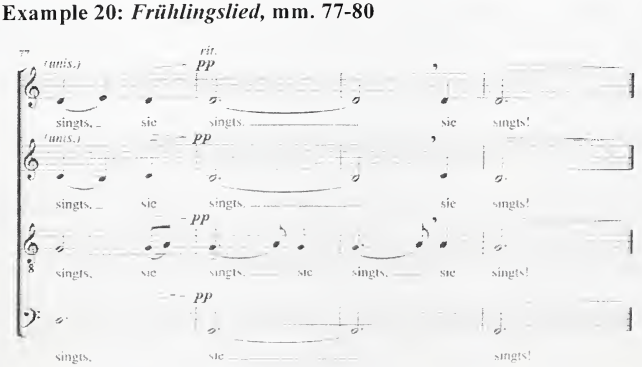

40
pp
p
wol - len dich fan - gen,
fan - gen, fan - gen,
pp
p
fan - gen, wol - len dich fan - gen,
fan - gen,
wol - len dich fan - gen,
wir wol - len dich fan - gen,
len dich fan - gen,
wol - len dich fan - gen,
wir wol - len dich fan - gen,

The relationship between the final stanza of Luengen's setting and Rilke's text is one last source of tension in that the musical sectionalization does not correspond to the textual division. Luengen has chosen to introduce the opening words of the final stanza during the transition into the final musical section rather than at the beginning of the final musical section. Structuring this transitional material is a gradual key change to G major that remains until the piece's close. Luengen justifies the breakdown in structural

cohesiveness in her setting to her following the intent of the text rather than its form: the teacher's lesson joins with the exuberance of the children; as the lesson has been absorbed, there is less distinction between the learned and the learning. The choice of setting the text to music in this way emphasizes the meaning of the words, and results in an attempt to deemphasize the dichotomy between teacher and student.

The motion toward reconciliation is reflected in the chorale setting of the final section, a *cantabile* coda. At this point in the poem Rilke has removed the child-like playfulness from his verse and returned to the image of earth as being rooted and grounded. Luengen considers this to be an analogy that ties the development of children to nature and the season of spring; both represent a wealth of potential for growth. The reference to roots in the poem, "und was gedruckt steht in Wurzeln und langen schwierigen Stämmen" (and what lies imprinted in roots and long, difficult stems) is also significant as it is an example of Rilke's use of vertical and horizontal imagery, something that Luengen notes and sets sensitively in several of her works through melodic contour. In the final stanza of this poem, it is the resolution of humankind's relationship with nature, represented by earth and the lessons learned by those on it, that allows Luengen to create a strongly tonal resolution to the piece on the words "sie singts!" (she sings) (see example 20).

Example 20: *Frühlingslied*, mm. 77-80



Mésange

Although the *Sonnets to Orpheus* and *Duono Elegies* were the last large collections published during Rilke's life, he continued to write up to his death; many of these works were published posthumously. Such is the case with his French works, published together after his death as *Poèmes et Dédicaces* (1920-1926). "Le Petit Cahier" is a grouping of two poems in this collection, and *Mésange* is the second of the two. The poem is the most structured of the five Rilke texts selected by Luengen, having three stanzas of four lines each. The poem follows a strictly alternating rhyme scheme of ABAB CDCD EFEF. Of Rilke's poems set by Luengen, *Mésange* is the most contemplative and modest in its tone, breadth and size, and the most free of tension. There is less tension in the subject matter itself, which describes a simple bird and the poet's relationship to it.

Luengen's setting of the poem was commissioned by and dedicated to the Phoenix Chamber Choir of Vancouver in 1998, shortly after Luengen was selected to take over the role of choir director from her former professor at UBC, Cortland Hultberg. The work follows a loose ABA form that observes the structure of the poem, and the harmonic language is largely tonal, albeit ambiguous; little dissonance is used. The setting is modest to correspond with Rilke's language, and is inward in its expressivity and communication of tension, with subtle manipulations of harmonic, registral and textural color to illustrate the text.

The piece opens with a dissonant pedal in the women's voices, with the soprano line sustaining a G against an F in the alto, and an exposed divided tenor line carrying the melody (see example 21). While not in the highest of registers for the tenor, the exposed

melody, to be sung at a *pianissimo* dynamic, is supported only by sustained notes that lie low in the registers of the women's voices. This results in a vulnerable opening tenor statement, and thus establishes an intimate and delicate dialogue between the poet and the object of his observation.

Example 21: *Mésange*, mm.1-4

This use of register to create suspense and subtle tension continues as the bass enters in its upper-middle register to fill out the texture in measure 3 (also in example 19). The tenor continues to carry the melodic line throughout the first stanza and, as seen in the setting of the third line of text, returns to the vulnerable upper register (see example 22).

Example 22: *Mésange*, mm.10-14

The contrasting middle section of *Mésange* corresponds to the second stanza of text, where the poet's focus shifts from the observation of the bird to that of his own position. Luengen creates this contrast through the use of a key change to B-flat major, a

faster rhythmic motion with a series of eighth notes in all voices, and an accompanying *poco accelerando* direction (see example 23). Significantly, this occurs when the poet considers the similarity between himself and the symbol of nature he has been observing. Luengen describes this phrase as speech-like in its simplicity of motion and quick articulation, as if spoken to oneself. This phrase grows through a crescendo as the connection is made between the poet and bird, but quickly returns to the subdued softer dynamic and slower tempo by measure 21 as the focus moves inward once more.

Example 23: *Mésange*, mm.15-26

allarg.
poco accel.
pleurs, je con tem-ple ce feu qui t'al lu-me à tra-vers ton plu-ma-ge
warmly
rall.
dru, et moi, et moi, plus ca-ché à la
bru me, moi, je ne crains de m'é
plus ca-ché à la bru me, je ne crains de m'é
moi, je ne crains de m'é
moi, je ne crains de m'é

The return to a more subdued expression is accomplished again through registral manipulation, where Luengen has set independent melodic lines in measures 22 to 26 in the soprano and alto voices, supported by drones in the remaining three voices. The melodic motion in these measures is descending, moving toward the lower register in both the soprano and alto lines. Luengen describes her method for accomplishing a sense of "anonymity" in the voices at this point by accessing the less strong registers of the female voice to create a more unified identity.[22] This method successfully illustrates the text, which is "plus caché à la brume" (more hidden by the mist). Placing the other voices in a pedal-like or droning function that supports the main melody with colourful non-triadic intervals creates a sense of unknown harmonic direction that effectively achieves aural representation of the mist. These drones create a slight sense of tension through the use of sevenths between the tenor and bass, but not to the extent that it is disruptive (see example 23).

For the last line of the middle stanza, the meter changes to 6/8 for the first time, resulting in a lighter, dance-like motion that emphasizes the fragmentation and repetition of text (see example 24) and supporting the mantra-like statement pondered by the poet: "je ne crains de m' éteindre non plus" (I am not afraid to burn out, either).

Example 24: *Mésange*, mm.27-29:

[22] Luengen uses the term to refer to the quality of blend possible when writing in the middle to low range.

Example 24 continued: *Mésange*, mm.30-33

It is during this phrase that the tenor voice, here divisi, is again prominent. This is heard through the insistent dissonance of a pedal B-flat against C. This is an example of an unobtrusive but significant role of harmonic tension used in a subtle manner. Luengen's rationale is that while the narrator is "not afraid of burning out", this does not prevent the action from happening, and so a sense of uncertainty remains despite the narrator's hopefulness. Instead of controlling the natural course of events, the narrator accepts the uncertainty, which is why the dissonance between the two notes (B-flat and C) remains unresolved throughout the phrase.

The return to the opening musical material corresponds with the beginning of the final stanza of text, and involves a return to the initial key signature and simple meter, and a modified return to the melodic content. In the final six measures of this setting a new idea is developed that begins with a reduced texture involving only the soprano and tenor voices and utilizes the last line of text, "nous aurons" (we will know). Luengen's textural manipulation draws the ear to the following two measures, which in four-part harmony sound richer in comparison to the sparseness of the two-part line at the beginning (see example 25).

Example 25: *Mésange*, mm.47-52:

molto rit.
nous au rons la joie, la joie de de main.
la joie, la joie de de main.
nous au - rons la joie, la joie de de main
la joie, la joie de de main

Luengen describes the significance of this passage as emanating from the use of the word "nous", a word that implies the joining of poet and nature. To emphasize the significance of the discovery between the poet and his link to nature, Luengen's harmonic support for "la joie" (the joy)[23] is rich and colorful in its expanded range and texture, but is nonetheless subdued to remain within the scope of the setting.

These two "la joie" chords in measures 48 to 49 set up the final phrase of the piece, which is centered tonally in G major, but lacks full cadential movement. This is significant since the final phrases of both the opening section and the contrasting middle section ended on unresolved seventh chords in C major and C minor seventh, respectively; both were approached unconventionally, and neither created a sense of closure. In the final phrase of Luengen's setting, there is a greater sense of harmonic resolution as the bass moves more conventionally from tonic to dominant to tonic in the key of G major. However, in each chord at least one voice expands beyond the traditional triadic structure with a non-harmonic tone, thereby avoiding a full sense of

[23] In Poulin's translation, included in Luengen's published score, "pleasure" is used, which Luengen acknowledges as a less than accurate translation of the French text.

closure (see example 25). In the context of this poem, this ambiguity creates an additional layer of musical tension that does not result in a distressing desire for resolution but rather a sense of anticipation and open-endedness. This resolution can be seen as the continuous path to align humankind and nature that Rilke seeks to understand in this poem.

Du Fremde: Musik

Du Fremde: Musik is distinguished from Luengen's other settings of Rilke as the only one set for four-part women's chorus. It is also the only poem for which Luengen altered the title. Rilke's original title is *An die Musik.* Luengen's reason for the change was purely practical, as so many works exist with the title *An die Musik* (Schubert, and Luengen sought a more unique solution. Ultimately, she felt that *Du Fremde: Musik* better captured the poem's intent.

An die Musik was written by Rilke in 1918, prior to the *Sonette an Orpheus*, from which *Frühlingslied* was taken. During this period Rilke began using metaphors and spatial figures in a way that would lead him toward abstraction in his poetry. Ryan finds this poem to be especially significant to understanding the possibilities of tension in poetic form. While discussing the poem's Modernist function, Ryan writes:

> In 'To Music' Rilke reworks several notions precious to the Symbolists, notably Verlaine's call for poetry to become closer to music in 'L'Art Poétique' [The Art of Poetry], and Mallarmé's idea that pure poetry is really a type of silence. Both concepts emphasize form as opposed to content, and Rilke's pared-down poem, at once ecstatic and questioning, alerts us to the problematic relationship of form and content from the very beginning. (Ryan 159)

Ryan's analysis of the poem considers that its predominantly dactylic meter references the classical elegiac form, while the classical pentameter is suggested without ever being

fully formed.[24] Influences of classical form on Rilke's work are present, but his efforts to experiment beyond traditional forms dominate the poem.

Ryan goes on to consider that 'music' in the poem is a manifestation of the metaphors that Rilke used in an attempt to capture the interaction between creator and inspiration, and the process of artistic creation; 'music' in this case is not a specific reference to the art form itself. It is this use of the term that sets up a tension in the perception of the poem: is Rilke describing music, or addressing it, or simply using the metaphor to represent a breadth of ideas that seem as imperceptible and intangible as the act of creation, of which music stands as an example? Ryan suggests that the uncertainty between these possibilities characterizes the tension that persists throughout the poem.[25] Ambiguity is further emphasized by his poetic imagery that is paradoxical in and of itself as well as difficult to conceptualize: "breathing of statues" and "the other side of air", for example.

The use of ambiguous ideas and tension in the relationship between poet and music results in a fragmented poem that juxtaposes consecutive, seemingly unrelated thoughts or images that rarely develop into full ideas. Luengen's setting, composed in 2002 as a commission for A Vancouver Women's Chorus directed by Crystal Bergman, acknowledges this fragmentation of imagery with a fully through-composed form that is difficult to analyze from a structural perspective as it intentionally avoids sectionalization. Structural ambiguity is enhanced by manipulation of register and timbre to convey tension in the musical setting, and Luengen makes use of textural tension through the use of unison.

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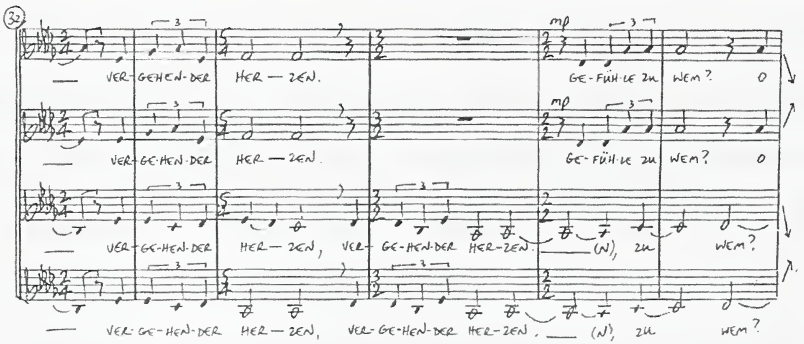
[24] Ryan, 160.
[25] Ibid.

The poem has only one structural division, which occurs between the fourth and fifth lines. This division separates the text between "vergehender Herzen" (passing hearts) and "Gefühle zu wem?" (Feelings for whom?). Luengen repeats and fragments the fourth line of text for some emphasis, but allows no time for a pause or other structural delineation of the poetic separation. The final reiteration of the text in the alto voice overlaps with the soprano entrance of the fifth line of text, further blurring the gap set up by Rilke. The altos then move seamlessly into the new text with an alteration of the words, from "vergehender Herzen. Gefühle zu wem?" to "vergehender Herze(n), zu wem?" omitting the noun "Gefühle", meaning "feelings". If anything, this modification of text is an effort to concatenate the two lines rather than to separate them, aligning with the meaning of, rather than the textual divide in, the poem (see example 26).

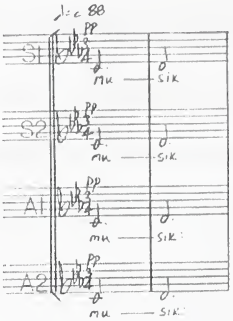
Example 26: *Du Fremde: Musik*, mm. 32-37:



Luengen plays with texture in the voice parts as an expressive tool to create tension. For example, she uses unison to draw attention to important lines of the poem in a way that determines the structure according to poetic meaning or intent rather than prosody, since the unison does not coincide with the beginning of lines or stanzas. An example of this occurs in the very opening of the piece, with all parts in unison for the first utterance of the word 'Musik' (see example 27). The choice to open the piece with

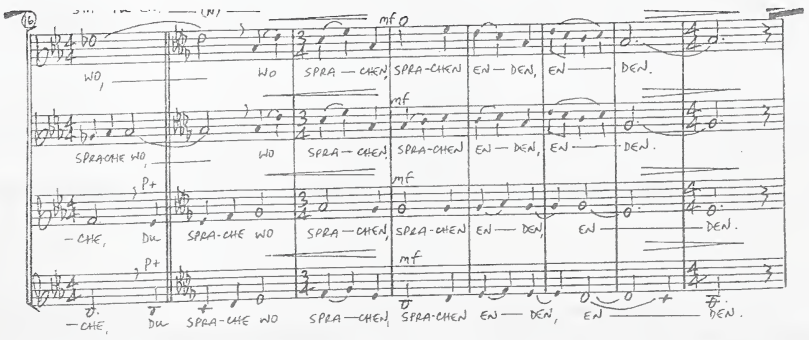
such a static sound that is harmonically ambiguous reflects the stillness of the unusual initial images: "Atem der Statuen" (breath of statues), and "Stille der Bilder" (silence of paintings), both of which are perplexing animations of inanimate objects.

Example 27: *Du Fremde: Musik*, mm. 1-2:



The next occurrence of tension through texture happens with doubling between the two soprano lines and is fleeting in that the lines move between three and four-voice texture, creating a sense of hesitant growth during the phrase "wo Sprachen ende" (where language ends). Here Luengen also modulates to the key of D-flat major, reflecting the movement from the stillness of non-living images to the human concept of language that requires a different use of colour. The motion between doubled soprano parts and a full four-part texture establishes this change by expanding slowly and hesitating between three and four-voice writing throughout the phrase (see example 28).

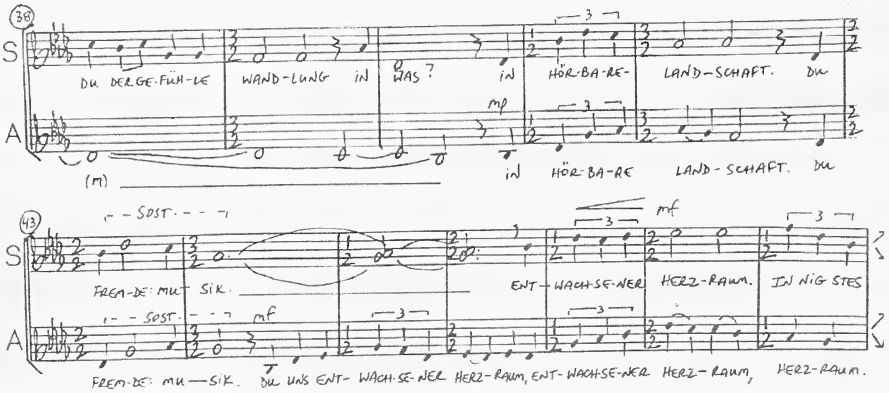
Example 28: *Du Fremde: Musik*, mm. 16-23:



Luengen's treatment of Rilke's separation between the fourth and fifth lines of poetry is also significant as another occurrence of reduced texture. This is heard in the alto doubling during the final repetition of "vergehender Herzen". The sopranos begin the next line of text in a loosely inverted version of this alto statement, also doubled, moving from D-flat to A-flat in an upward perfect fifth motion, as opposed to an inversion of that interval seen between the E-flat and A-flat in the alto line (refer to example 26).

The next occurrence of unison follows immediately. Here the altos sustain a pedal beneath the unison soprano voice, asking, 'O du der gefühle Wandlung in was?' (O you, the transformation of feelings into what?), emphasizing the question that propels the poem. This is the only phrase of the piece pared down to only two voices (see example 29).

Example 29: *Du Fremde: Musik*, mm. 38-49

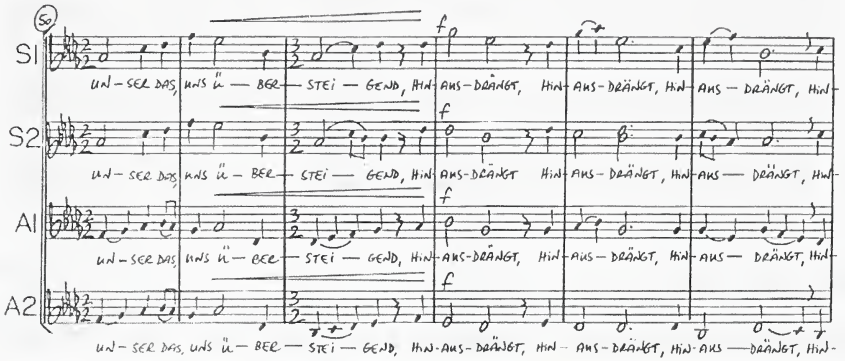


The response to this question, which begins still in a reduced texture but returns to four-part homophonic writing, also contains the words selected by Luengen as the title for her composition:

in hörbare Landschaft.	into audible landscape.
Du Fremde: Musik. Du uns entwachsener	You stranger: music. You heart-space
Herzraum. Innigstes unser,	grown out of us. The deepest space in us,
das, uns übersteigend, hinausdrängt,	which, rising above us, forces its way out,

At the climax of the work are the words "hörbare Landschaft" (audible landscape), illustrated musically by an expanded texture back into four voices, by movement to the highest point thus far in register in the soprano 1 and the lowest in the alto 2 (see example 30). Compared to the sparseness of texture heard earlier, such use of more expansive, chordal writing creates a richer, fuller sound.

Example 30: ***Du Fremde: Musik*****, mm. 50-55**

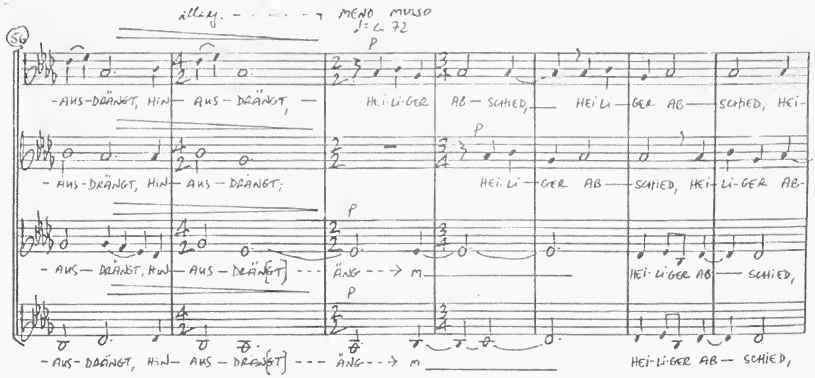


This phrase also illustrates Luengen's treatment of register to act as an area of tension in the work. The higher tessitura in the soprano combined with the *crescendo* and dynamic marking of *forte* create a sense of impassioned outburst not yet seen in the piece.

As the final word "hinausdrängt" (driven out of us) is repeated, the soprano drops in register and the next phrase is introduced with a slower tempo marking *meno mosso* and return to a unison texture. Again there is a pedal note in the lower voices and an overlapping of the previous text with new text, introduced in the soprano voice (see example 31). "Heiliger Abschied" (holy departure) is set with a return to the middle register in the soprano voices, which creates a sense of inward contemplation and anonymity, such as Luengen described in connection with her setting of *Mésange*. In *Du Fremde: Musik* Luengen describes this use of register as an effort to become 'otherworldly' in the vocal characterization. Luengen's goal of 'anonymity' is further

achieved by overlapping of imitative entries between the two soprano voices, followed by a repetition of a similar melodic fragment, lowered by a fifth with rhythmic diminution in the alto voices.

Example 31: ***Du Fremde: Musik*****, mm. 56-62:**



The motion into the next line of text also makes use of reduced texture, with a sustained A-flat in the soprano 1 against a G-flat in the soprano 2, also joined by doubled altos in measure 69 (see example 32). This follows a decrescendo at the end of the previous phrase, and draws the listener's attention to the beginning of a new phrase through its sparse texture.

Example 32: ***Du Fremde: Musik*****, mm. 63-70**

It is the final phrase that combines unison with silence and sparse harmonic language to illustrate the poem's final phrase: "nicht mehr bewohnbar" (no longer

habitable). A full measure of silence, the only one in the entire piece, is heard at measure 86, and followed by a reduced two-part texture, with doubled entries first in the alto voices, then sopranos (see example 33).

Example 33: ***Du Fremde: Musik*****, mm. 84-92**

This is another example of fluctuation in vocal texture between two and three-part occurring throughout the phrase. Although the sopranos and altos return to unisons within their sections, the two voices remain independent from one another in terms of text until the penultimate and final syllables of the piece. The repetition of the phrase in this fluctuating texture illustrates the sense of tension within the imagery of the non-habitable environment being expressed, an image that returns to the inanimate stance taken at the poem's opening.

This final phrase also concludes the piece with an open fifth, approached by a non-triadic harmony. This is ultimately a less than satisfying resolution in that it does not resolve any of the tension created by the use of silence leading up to the final phrase. This ending is also the least harmonically traditional of the works studied, in that it is the least cadential or triadic close to any piece discussed thus far, with the exception of the first movement of *Ô Lacrimosa*, which also ended with an open fifth. The lack of tonal cadence, in *Ô Lacrimosa* referencing an archaic plainchant tradition, could be a form of word-painting in this instance, creating a hollow close that reflects the text it sets. By remaining musically unfinished in its ending, the musical setting corresponds with the paradoxical images in the poem that are impossible to fully grasp.

In tiefen Nächten

In tiefen Nächten is found in Rilke's second book, *Das Buch von der Pilgerschaft (The Book of Pilgrimage*, 1901) of *Das Stunden-Buch* (*The Book of Hours*). The poems were written and compiled six months after Rilke's marriage. Despite such a change in his personal life, it is at this point in his poetry that Rilke addresses God and issues of the divine more directly than seen in many of his other works up until then.

The Elora Festival Singers commissioned Luengen's composition in 2002, for performance under artistic director Noel Edison. Luengen's setting reflects the skill level of this accomplished choir and their ability to successfully internalize and perform a lengthier, more visceral poem that incorporates extensive development of imagery. The poem describes the poet's arduous journey toward an unknown figure of divinity. His physical journey unfolds through frequent use of opposing linear and spatial relationships in the text: digging into the ground, traveling along a path, hands raised up to space and

spring rain falling. This poem has no strict form or rhyme pattern; however, Luengen has chosen to follow the Rilke's structural delineations in her setting. Tension results from the opposition within the imagery and is illustrated musically through the use of harmonic coloring of text and rhythmic instability. At the climax in measures 58 to 62, for example, Luengen combines an obscuring of meter and rhythmic instability with registral manipulation and harmonic tension to highlight the poetic struggle.

The first phrase of text is set using a descending motive that begins in the lowest voice, the bass, to describe "in tiefen Nächten" (in the depths of night); this is reiterated by tenor and soprano voices in measures 2 and 7, respectively (see example 34). The next phrase of text is repeated and fragmented, and each time the word 'Schatz' (treasure) appears, there is a hint of tension heard in the closeness of the major seconds that occur first in measure 7 with a D-flat and E-flat in the bass, and in the tenor at measure 10, with a G-flat and A-flat. Luengen describes this harmonic choice as illustrating something waiting to be unearthed (see example 35).

Example 34: In tiefen Nächten, mm. 1-4

Example 35: In tiefen Nächten, 'schatz' m. 5-7 and m.10

The second stanza is separated from the first by a new tempo and texture, a marking of *molto legato; grazioso*, and the entrance of a triplet rhythm that continues throughout the first two lines of the stanza:

Aber der Weg zu dir ist furchtbar weit und, weil ihn lange keiner ging, verweht.	But the path to you is terrifyingly far – long forsaken the tracks are blown over.

This rhythmic figure depicts the action of walking on the path; rhythmic instability, created by the overlapping triplet and duplet figures, illustrates the clumsiness and effort of the walk (see example 36). The triplet rhythm moves between voices and occurs in at least one voice for every beat of the next nine measures. For most beats, the triplet moves against a pair of eighth notes in one of the other voices, thus setting up the rhythmic instability throughout the phrase. Further tension is created by this rhythmic figure through an inconsistency in melodic direction between the triplets: some repeat the same pitch, some move in conjunct motion, and some have a disjunct quality with a leap upward to the final of the three notes. The walking along the path is depicted as a clumsy and arduous task through the constant fluctuation between triplet and duplet rhythms and inconsistent melodic contour, never resulting in a clearly established direction or meter.

Example 36: In tiefen Nächten, mm. 20-28

The next two lines of the second stanza turn to a more intimate subject when the poet addresses the loneliness of the being he is seeking. To emphasize the change in subject, Luengen creates a pedal effect in the three upper voices to allow the bass to carry the text and melody in a more intimate, soloistic manner and thus depict the poet's sense of aloneness. This lasts until the text returns to the idea of travel, at which point a full, homophonic texture returns, musically moving away from the intimate soloistic texture (see example 37).

The beginning of the third stanza is marked with the first ensemble rest of the piece, as well as a new tempo marking and *misterioso* indication. This text is a departure from Rilke's usual expression of tension in that the dramatic action is described in a much more visceral way. From the expression of depths of night and the downward

digging gesture at the beginning of the poem, we now see a move upward as the hands gesture toward the sky:

Und meine Hände, welche blutig sind vom Graben, heb ich offen in den Wind, so dass sie sich verzweigen wie ein Baum.	And my hands, bloodied from digging, I openly raise them into the wind, so they may branch out like a tree.

Example 37: In tiefen Nächten, mm. 29-49

UND VER-WEHT, VER-WEHT, VER-WEHT,
UND VER-WEHT, VER-WEHT, VER-WEHT,
-NER GING, UND WEIL IHN KEI-NER GING, VER-WEHT,
GING, VER-WEHT. VER-WEHT. O DU BIST
poco più mosso
VER-WEHT, EIN-SAM, DU HERZ, DU HERZ, DAS ZU ENT-FERN-TEN,
EIN-SAM DU BIST EIN-SAM-KEIT, DU HERZ, DU HERZ, DAS ZU ENT-FERN-TEN
Allegro
misterioso
HERZ, ENT-FERN-TEN, ENT-FERN-TEN TA-LEN GEHT.
UND MEI-NE HÄN-DE WEL-CHE
HERZ, DAS ZU ENT-FERN-TEN TA-LEN GEHT
HÄN-DE WEL-CHE
HERZ, DAS ZU ENT-FERN-TEN TA-LEN GEHT.
UND MEI-NE HÄN-DE WEL-CHE
HERZ, ENT-FERN-TEN TA-LEN GEHT. HÄN-DE WEL-CHE
* CLOSE TO 'A' QUICKLY
CLOSE TO 'D' AT LAST
POSSIBLE MOMENT
BLU-TIG SIND VOM GRA-BEN -EN WIND, HEB ICH OF-FEN IN DEN WIND,
BLU-TIG SIND VOM GRA-BEN -EN WIN-D, ICH IN DEN WIND,
BLU-TIG SIND VOM GRA-BEN -EN WIN-D, HEB ICH IN DEN WIND,
BLU-TIG SIND VOM GRA-BEN -EN WIN-D, DEN WIND,

The opening phrase of this section is significant because Luengen incorporates a change of key. Despite the non-triadic harmonies and the lack of cadential motion heard so far in the piece, this is the first use of non-harmonic tones to stray from the home key of D-flat major. Harmonic instability here is unique in that the chord used on the most visceral word "blutig" (bloody), in measure 46, is enharmonically related to the home key, although it sounds foreign in context: anchored by a C-sharp, enharmonically the tonic D-flat, in both the bass and soprano, this appears in an F-sharp minor triad, which does not have a functional relationship to the home key (see example 37). Harmonic departure from the home key is heard before the "blutig" chord in measure 46 with the introduction of a D-natural in the alto voice in measure 45, echoed by the tenor and bass on the third and fifth quarter notes of the measure, respectively. This results in an unsettled harmonic tension, which corresponds to the tension in the visceral poetic imagery. The effect of the key change is also enhanced by the use of word-painting on 'Wind' (wind), where Luengen has directed the singers to resonate on the 'n' of the word for several beats to create an onomatopoeic effect.

In the third line of this stanza, the text describes the hands as "verzweigen wie ein Baum" (branching out like a tree). This is the crux of the poem and also the climax of Luengen's musical setting. This passage is comparable to *Ô Lacrimosa*, in which the imagery of the climax also reflects "branching out" in growth. Musically, the "branching out" is seen in the return of the triplet figure, still in tension with simultaneous duplet eighth notes. This rhythmic instability is combined with a slow, steady crescendo and a move to G minor, a key that is very remote from the home key of D-flat major (see example 38).

The prevalence of F-sharps and B-flats and occasional E-flats between measures 50 and 57 indicates that the piece moves to G minor during this phrase, but there is no cadential movement to confirm this. The soprano and alto lines are now paired, with the male voices imitating the rhythmic motives of the women's voices. This pairing results in disparity between triplet and eighth-note figures. The rhythmic tension is enhanced by harmonic dissonance created as the figures interact. This tension does not resolve in any traditional manner throughout the phrase. With the aid of a second *crescendo*, the phrase culminates at measure 57 in an E-flat minor chord, enharmonically spelled using a D-sharp and F-sharp, with a tension-bearing major seventh in the soprano. This is followed by silence (a rest) in all voices.

Example 38: In tiefen Nächten, mm. 50-57

HEB ICH OFFEN IN DEN WIND, SO DAß SIE SICH VER-ZWEI-GEN,
WIN — D, IN DEN WIND, SO DAß SO DAß SIE SICH VER- ZWEI-GEN, SO DAß
WIN — D, HEB ICH IN DEN WIND, SO DAß SIE SICH VER- ZWEI-GEN
WIN — D, DEN WIND, SO DAß SIE SICH VER- ZWEI-GEN
SIE SICH VER-ZWEI-GEN, SO DAß SIE SICH VER- ZWEI-GEN, SIE SICH VER — ZWEI — GEN,
SIE SICH VER-ZWEI-GEN, SO DAß SIE SICH VER- ZWEI-GEN, SIE SICH VER — ZWEI — GEN,
SO DAß SIE SICH VER-ZWEI-GEN, SO DAß SIE SICH VER- ZWEI-GEN VER — ZWEI — GEN,
— SIE SICH VER-ZWEI-GEN, SO DAß SIE SICH VER- ZWEI-GEN VER-ZWEI — GEN.

The choice to structurally segment the text with a rest further emphasizes the tension created in the phrase by creating a structural arrival point without any harmonic

resolution. Unexpectedly, as this climactic phrase continues to build after the rest, Luengen returns to the home key of D-flat major in measure 59 (see example 39). This return is suggested by the key signature, but is not confirmed within the phrase by any cadential movement or sense of resolution.

Example 39: In tiefen Nächten, mm. 58-62

A final repetition of the words "ein Baum" (a tree) continues to be articulated in the inner voices as a harmonic support that connects the next line of text. The outer voices share the phrase, "ich sauge dich mit ihnen aus dem Raum" (I seize you with them out of space), and so illustrate the use of registral extremes to reflect the spatial expanse of the text (see example 40). This is reinforced by use of the widely-spaced chord used to set the word "zerschellt" (shattered), only slightly less expanded than the climactic chord of "Baum" heard earlier. To further illustrate this "shattering", Luengen makes use of several rests and melodic fragmentation in the phrase that spans from measure 67 to 71. The frequency of rests in these measures is remarkable in the setting.

Luengen's setting of the final three lines of text offers a resolution more elaborate and more clearly stated than any other poem examined in this study. Rilke's struggle with

the relationship between man and the divinity of nature is cyclical in this poem, perhaps offering a response to the question that fuelled much of the tension of his writings.

Example 40: In tiefen Nächten, mm. 62-70

The starkness of the actions and imagery at the beginning of the poem is now contrasted with a gentle image of falling rain upon the earth. Luengen's musical setting of these three final lines is structurally clear, with phrases that are even in length. Harmonic and rhythmic tensions gradually dissipate, with imitative pairings between the women's and the men's voices mostly in triplets that are noticeably less disjunct and less tension-invoking than previous triplets in the piece. With only one exception (measure 76) these triplets are not paired against duplet eighth notes but rather steady quarter notes (see example 41). The greater rhythmic activity of this figure seems simply to depict the falling rain imagery described by Rilke.

Example 41: In tiefen Nächten, mm. 71-83

The final fifteen measures of music are entirely homophonic, and the harmonic language is imbued with non-harmonic tones, which here seem much less startling than previously. Here harmonic tension occurs only on each utterance of 'Sternen' (stars) and 'Regen' (rain), their dissonance quickly dissipating as the next word is sung (see example 42).

Example 42: In tiefen Nächten. mm. 84-94

Allegro
RE — GEN, SANFT WIE EIN FRÜH-LINGS RE — GEN, RE — GEN, RE — GEN,
RE — GEN, SANFT WIE EIN FRÜH-LINGS RE — GEN, RE — GEN, RE — GEN,
RE — GEN, SANFT WIE EIN FRÜH-LINGS RE — GEN, RE — GEN, RE — GEN,
RE — GEN, SANFT WIE EIN FRÜH-LINGS RE — GEN, RE — GEN,
RIT.
WIE EIN FRÜH-LINGS — RE — GEN, FRÜH-LINGS-RE — GEN FÄLLT.
WIE EIN FRÜH-LINGS — RE — GEN, FRÜH-LINGS-RE — GEN FÄLLT.
WIE EIN FRÜH-LINGS — RE — GEN, FRÜH — LINGS — RE-GEN FÄLLT.
WIE EIN FRÜH-LINGS — RE — GEN, FRÜH-LINGS-RE — GEN FÄLLT.

The closing two measures of the piece are significant in that the piece concludes with a traditional cadential progression of a full perfect authentic cadence in the home key of D-flat major. This is the first instance in any of Luengen's settings that such a full resolution has been provided. Here it that reflects the cyclical idea of resolution provided by Rilke in the poem.

Conclusions

The poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke is fraught with the poet's struggle to understand through his creative journey the relationship between humankind and nature, the latter of which Rilke thought to be symbolic of the divine. Rilke believed this struggle to be difficult to express, yet fundamental to the whole of human existence, perhaps explaining

why his efforts at describing the relationship continue to resonate decades after his death. Ramona Luengen was clearly influenced and inspired by Rilke's writings, and her settings of his poetry approach this struggle with a sensitivity conveyed in a variety of ways. To communicate the struggle musically, she explores the use of several elements of music that function structurally to create tension, manipulating these to establish expectancies, and to elicit responses in the listener. Her use of dynamics, dissonance, ambiguous harmonic and tonal hierarchies, unexpected melodic contours and elements of instability in metric or rhythmic areas, and timbral and registral extremes are all elements that create tension in Luengen's settings of Rilke's poems. These sometimes work in conjunction with Rilke's poetic form and sometimes against his structural design, further contributing to the creation of tension and its potential for resolution in the music.

To differing degrees, the same sense of struggle was communicated in each of the poems studied. *Mésange,* the smallest scale poem, also provided the least amount of tension in its form and content. Tension here was expressed in a less obvious way, using registral and textural fluctuation, harmonically ambiguous writing, and sustained dissonance that remained void of resolution in a traditional manner. This harmonic language is one of the most consistently used means of expressing tension by Luengen, appearing in each of the five pieces studied. *Frühlingslied*, a setting that also avoids an overly dramatic increase of tension, combines several techniques at once but rarely develops the ideas thoroughly enough to establish a sustained sense of tension. This is likely in order to reflect the lighter poetic subject and playful mood of the poem, while still responding to internal subtleties of tension within the text. *Frühlingslied* conveys the tension between youth and authority, which is seen in Luengen's setting through the use

of rhythmic instability, an obscuring of meter and unresolved harmonic writing. The form of her musical setting of *Frühlingslied* itself creates tension, since the formal divisions of the music do not correspond directly with the divisions in Rilke's sonnet form.

The unusual imagery provided by Rilke and the corresponding musical language created by Luengen to communicate those images musically provides the basis for much of the tension in *Du Fremde: Musik.* Structural ambiguity between the text and music illustrates the poem's free form, and Luengen's manipulation of register and timbre refer musically to the tension within Rilke's images. Through the use of textural reduction and doubling of melodies between voices Luengen also communicates tension by making textural choices that do not always correspond to the poem's structure or imagery.

It is the first and final settings of Rilke's poetry examined here, *Ô Lacrimosa* and *In tiefen Nächten*, that hold the most dramatic and large-scale illustrations of tension, communicated each time through a combination of several of the areas of tension examined. The climax in the second movement of *Ô Lacrimosa* engages in the most dramatic example of harmonic dissonance, metric and rhythmic instability and registral expansion explored in this study. The use of rhythmic instability and a consistent quality of dissonance in the harmonic language of *In tiefen Nächten* provide a similar sense of tension resulting in dramatic climax. Of the five works studied, the two pieces that engage the most elements of tension simultaneously also share the most overt references to spirituality and the divine: the Marian imagery of *Ô Lacrimosa* and the visceral imagery of *In tiefen Nächten.* It is the reconciliation of mankind and the divine that most frequently appeared in Rilke's writings, and Rilke's gift of imagery is never more

inspiring than when the relationship between the divine and humankind is addressed in an explicit way, rather than relying fully on metaphor and symbolism.

Text and music offer numerous opportunities to experience tension, a quality clearly evident in the works studied here. Features examined in earlier studies in tension such as those by Lerdahl and Jackendoff, and Meyer, are similar, considering dynamics, harmonic and tonal hierarchies, melodic contour, meter and timbral considerations and structural or rhythmic instability. Many of the same fundamental musical features were part of Farbood's model of musical tension, which showed through her experiments that these categories, depending on how they are arranged and interrelated, create expectancies that can be manipulated in the music to produce tension. Luengen's music explores and combines many of these musical features in ways that create tension, and she often chooses to only partially resolve it.

The continued interest in Rainer Maria Rilke's poetry indicates that his words resonate with generations of seekers in a way that translates beyond language or generation barriers. It is this quality that draws Ramona Luengen to Rilke repeatedly when seeking texts to set to a cappella choral music. Her ability to interpret Rilke's images and communicate such a breadth of profound and complex ideas is a testament to her artistry and sensitivity, and her music is an example of Canadian choral repertoire that successfully resonates as universally as Rilke's words.

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Appendices: Complete Texts and Translations

All original texts and translations are taken from Luengen's manuscripts or published scores. When authors have been indicated in the score, they appear here. When they have not been indicated, they remain uncredited.

Ô Lacrimosa (1925)

(trilogie, zu einer künftigen Musik von Ernst Krenek)

I
Oh Tränenvolle, die, verhaltner Himmel,
über der Landschaft ihres Schmerzes schwer wird.
Und wenn sie weint, so weht ein weicher Schauer
schräglichen Regens an des Herzens Sandschicht.

Oh Tränenschwere. Waage aller Tränen!
Die sich nicht Himmel fühlte, da sie klar war,
und Himmel sein muß um der Wolken willen.

Wie wird es deutlich und wie nah, dein Schmerzland,
unter des strengen Himmels Einheit. Wie ein
in seinem Liegen langsam waches Antlitz,
das waagrecht denkt, Welttiefe gegenüber.

II
Nichts als ein Atemzug ist das Leere, und jenes
grüne Gefülltsein der schönen
Bäume: ein Atemzug!
Wir, die Angeatmeten noch,
heute noch Angeatmeten, zählen
diese, der Erde, langsame Atmung,
deren Eile wir sind.

III
Aber die Winter! Oh diese heimliche
Einkehr der Erde. Da um die Toten
in dem reinen Rückfall der Säfte
Kühnheit sich sammelt,
künftiger Frühlinge Kühnheit.
Wo das Erdenken geschieht
unter der Starre; wo das von den großen
Sommern abgetragene Grün
wieder zum neuen
Einfall wird und zum Spiegel des Vorgefühls;
wo die Farbe der blumen
jenes Verweilen unserer Augen vergißt.

O Lacrimosa

(trilogy for future music of Ernst Krenek)

I
Oh tear-filled figure who, like a sky held back,
grows heavy above the landscape of her sorrow.
And when she weeps, the gentle raindrops fall,
slanting upon the sand-bed of her heart.

O heavy with weeping. Scale to weigh all tears.
Who felt herself not sky, since she was shining
and sky exists only for clouds to form in.

How clear it is, how close, your land of sorrow,
beneath the stearn sky's oneness. Like a face
that lies there, slowly waking up and thinking
horizontally, into endless depths.

II
It is nothing but a breath, the void.
And that green fulfillment
of blossoming trees: a breath.
We, who are still the breathed-upon,
today still the breathed-upon, count
this slow breathing of earth,
whose hurry we are.

III
Ah, but the winters! The earth's mysterious
turning-within. Where around the dead
in the pure receding of sap,
boldness is gathered,
the boldness of future springtimes.
Where imagination occurs
beneath what is rigid; where all the green
worn thin by the vast summers
again turns into a new
insight and the mirror of intuition;
where the flowers' color
wholly forgets that lingering of our eyes.

-Translation: S. Mitchell

Frühlingslied (1922)

Frühling ist wiedergekommen. Die Erde
ist wie ein Kind, das Gedichte weiß;
viele, o viele. ... Für die Beschwerde
langen Lernens bekommt sie den Preis.

Streng war ihr Lehrer. Wir mochten das Weiße
an dem Barte des alten Manns.
Nun, wie das Grüne, das Blaue heiße.
dürfen wir fragen: sie kanns, sie kanns!

Erde, die frei hat, du glückliche, spiele
nun mit den Kindern. Wir wollen dich fangen,
fröhliche Erde. Dem Frohsten gelingts.

O, was der Lehrer sir lehrte, das Viele,
und was gedruckt steht in Wurzeln und langen
schwierigen Stämmen: sie singts, sie singts!

Spring Song

Spring has come back. The Earth
is like a child who memorized many poems,
so many! ... For this
long hard study, she wins the prize.

Her teacher was tough. We liked the white hue
of the beard below the old man's nose.
Now, we can quiz her what the blue
and green are called: she knows, she knows!

You lucky earth, from duty freed, play
with the children. We want to hold on to you,
jolly earth. The jolliest succeed.

What teacher taught her, all those things,
and what stands written in roots and long
entangled stems: she sings, she sings!

-Translation: H. Landman

* * *

Mésange (1920-26)

Ô TOI, petit cœur, qui hivernes
avec nous au milieu des rigueurs,
tu te poses -, tendre lanterne
de vie -, sur les arbres en pleurs;

je contemple ce feu qui t'allume
à travers ton plumage dru,
et moi, plus cache à la brume
je ne crains de m'éteindre non plus.

A-t-elle peur de demain cette neige?
En effet, elle durcit en vain;
mais nous, qu'une flamme protége,
nous aurons la joie de demain.

Mésange

O you, small heart that winters
out these bitter days with us
-tender lantern of life-
you perch on the weeping trees;

I reflect on the fire shining
through your thick-set feathers,
and I, more hidden by the mist,
I am not afraid to burn out, either.

Does this snow fear tomorrow?
In fact, it hardens in vain;
but we, protected by a flame,
we will know the pleasure of tomorrow.

-Translation: A. Poulin, Jr.

Du Fremde: Musik (1918)

Musik: Atem der Statuen. Vielleicht:
Stille der Bilder. Du Sprache wo Sprachen
enden. Du Zeit,
die senkrecht steht auf der Richtung
vergehender Herzen.

Gefühle zu wem? O du der Gefühle
Wandlung in was?— in hörbare Landschaft.
Du Fremde: Musik. Du uns entwachsener
Herzraum. Innigstes unser,
das, uns übersteigend, hinausdrängt,—
heiliger Abschied:
da uns das Innre umsteht
als geübteste Ferne, als andre
Seite der Luft:
rein,
riesig
nicht mehr bewohnbar.

You stranger: Music

Music. The breathing of statues. Perhaps:
The silence of pictures. You, language where all
languages
end. You,
time standing straight up out of the
direction of hearts passing on.

Feeling, for whom? O the transformation of
feeling into what?— into audible landscape.
Music: you stranger. Passion which has
outgrown us. Our inner most being,
transcending, driven out of us,—
holiest of departures:
inner worlds now
the most practiced of distances, as the other side
of thin air:
pure,
immense,
no longer habitable.

-Translation: R. Luengen

* * *

In tiefen Nächten (1901)

In tiefen Nächten grab ich dich, du Schatz.
Denn alle Überflüsse, die ich sah,
sind Armut und armsäliger Ersatz
für deine Schönheit, die noch nie geschah.

Aber der Weg zu dir ist furchtbar weit
und, weil ihn lange keiner ging, verweht.
O du bist einsam. Du bist Einsamkeit,
du Herz, das zu entfernten Talen geht.

Und meine Hände, welche blutig sind
vom Graben, heb' ich offen in den Wind,
so dass sie sich verzweigen wie ein Baum.
Ich sauge dich mit ihnen aus dem Raum
als hättest du dich einmal dort zerschellt
in einer ungeduldigen Gebärde,
und fielest jetzt, eine zerstäubte Welt,
aus fernen Sternen wieder auf die Erde
sanft wie ein Frühlingsregen fällt.

In the depth of night

In the depth of night I dig for you, O treasure.
For all the superfluities which I have seen
are poverty and paltry substitutes
for your beauty which has not yet happened.

But the path to you is terrifyingly far –
long forsaken, the tracks are blown over.
O you are lonely. You are loneliness itself,
you heart, that travels to distant valleys.

And my hands, bloodied from digging,
I openly raise into the wind,
so they may branch out like a tree.
With them I seize you out of space,
as if you had once shattered yourself there
in an impatient gesture,
and were falling now, a world reduced to dust,
from distant stars back to earth
as gently as the spring rain fa

- Translation: R. Luengen